

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

June 2015

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Meeting – June 30th

Please join us at St. Mark's Orthodox Church in Bethesda at 8 PM.



Show & tell from the May meeting included

a selection of fruit jars,

a set of Schlueter and Schleuter (error) bottles,

a pontiled jar from Wells, Miller, and Provost, NY,

and a small collection of ink and other bottles from a local collector.



Meetings: 8:00 PM on the last Tuesday of each month January-June, October-November; picnic in September.

President: Andy Goldfrank

Vice President: Al Miller

Secretary: Jim Sears

Pontil: Jim Sears (email: searsjim@usa.net, PH: 609/472-5473) &

Andy Goldfrank (email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com, PH: 202/588-0543)

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The Shooting of B. B. Dillard: Accident or Suicide?

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

Dated December 15, 1909, the Richmond Times-Dispatch headlined a story about B. B. Dillard, a well-known Roanoke, Virginia, whiskey dealer and civic leader (**Fig. 1**). At the age of 40, in front of his wife of only four months, he had shot and killed himself. Was it an accident, as she insisted, or had he committed suicide?

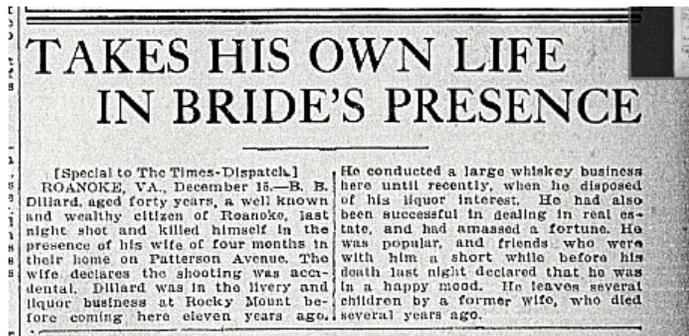


Fig. 1: Newspaper article

Dillard was born in November 1868 in Southwestern Virginia, to Alfred Terrell and Sarah Jane Brosius Dillard. His parent christened him with the startling given names of “Burger Brosius.” Little wonder that he preferred to be called “B. B.” throughout his adult life. The Dillards had five children, all boys, but seemingly had run out of standard names when Burger Brosius came along.

The 1880 census found the family living on a farm in the hamlet of Bonbrook in Franklin County, Virginia. At 12 years old Dillard was in school, where he must have faced teasing over his unusual name. During his early manhood he appears to have gravitated to the county seat, Rocky Mount. Named for a steep cliff near the town, Rocky Mount was founded by English colonists around 1760 who established a courthouse there soon after the Revolutionary War. During the Civil War, numerous planter families sought refuge in town, bringing their slaves with them. Confederate General Jubal Early was born on a nearby farm as was Booker T. Washington, an early leader of American blacks.

Although B. B. Dillard’s activities during his years in Rocky Mount go unrecorded, my speculation is that he was engaged in the mercantile trades while keeping a hand in farming. It was in Rocky Mount that he met and married his first wife, Estelle. She had been born about 1871 and was slightly younger than B.B. Although his obituary says that this couple had several children, I have been unable to find census or other data on their identities.

About 1888, Dillard decided that he needed a larger town to satisfy his ambitions or perhaps to finance his growing familial responsibilities. As a result he moved his business and

family to nearby Roanoke, Virginia. His move was well timed. A major trade there was selling whiskey — two ways. First, a thirsty populace inhabited the town so that saloons proliferated. Second, access to railroad lines made it possible to send whiskey by express mail north and south, east and west. Given a proliferation of distillers in the Virginia mountains (many of them legal), supplies were plentiful. Dillard saw the opportunity and established a wholesale liquor store downtown on Salem Avenue, the street shown here (**Fig. 2**). In addition to his Salem Avenue store, Dillard owned a livery stable on West Court Street, having bought the Walter L. Young Livery & Feed Store, the ownership recorded on 1898 and 1902 Sanborn fire maps. Dillard’s saloon was located near the stables.



Fig. 2: Downtown Roanoke, Salem St

A contemporary photo (**Fig. 3**) captures the interior of Dillard’s liquor store, indicating that it was a substantial establishment. The place featured a potbellied stove for heat and gas lamps for light. Note the row after row of bottles on the shelf on both sides of the aisle. On the left at back are barrels full of whiskey with spigots to fill stoneware jugs that can be seen on the floor. My guess is that the gent with the long coat, bow tie and mustache at far left is Dillard himself.



Fig. 3: Dillards' bar

Although the jugs seen in the photo are of one and two gallon size, Dillard also sold his whiskey in smaller containers, such as quart bail jugs (Fig. 4). He also provided whiskey in small amounts for giveaways to favored customers or perhaps as salesman samples (Fig. 5). Both his large and smaller stoneware have an underglaze transfer label that identified them as from B. B. Dillard at 187 Salem Avenue-West. Just as mini jugs were a popular way of advertising in Roanoke among the whiskey trade, so were shot glasses, probably gifted to saloonkeepers and barmen. Dillard's were among the most ornate, featuring gold rims, elegant design, and deep etching (Figs. 6, 7). All were gifted with the whiskey man's compliments and messages such as "Liquor Dealer" and "Fine Whiskey."

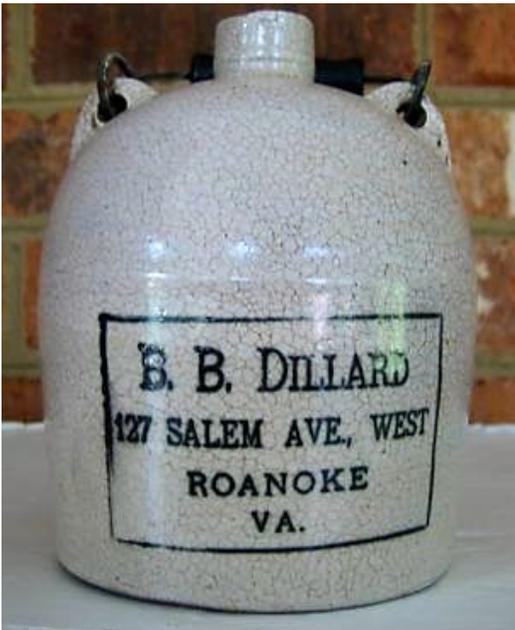


Fig. 4: Dillard bail jug

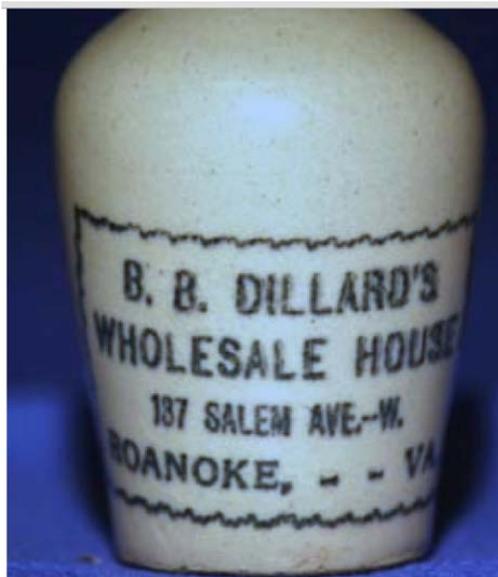


Fig. 5: Dillard mini-jug



Fig. 6 Shot glass #1



Fig 7: Shot glass #2

In 1904, tragedy struck the Dillard family. Estelle Dillard, only 33 years old, died. Here gravestone is shown here (Fig. 8). B.B. was left with small children to raise. As great a sorrow as this may have been, he did not immediately remarry but appears to have thrown his efforts into his work and community development. In 1906 Dillard was part of a local group of businessmen and investors who sought a charter from the Roanoke City Council to build an electric railway in the city. They were successful and in 1907 the Roanoke Traction Company was incorporated, capitalized at \$40,000 (\$1 million today). Dillard was named a member of the board. During this period he also was investing in Roanoke area real estate.



Fig. 8: Estelle Dillard grave

The following year he was a member of a group of Roanoke whiskey dealers who complained to the State of Virginia Corporation Commission that the Southern Express Company, the principal shipper in that part of America, was refusing to take their mail order whiskey into three far western Virginia towns that had voted themselves “dry” under local options laws. It was still technically legal to ship liquor into such localities but express agents who did so frequently were targeted for arrest by local authorities. Although the State Commission ruled in favor of the liquor dealers, Dillard sold his liquor store the following year, likely sensing the onrush of prohibition in Virginia.

In 1909, five years after Estelle’s death, Dillard married again. His second wife was Nannie Carrie Flagg, the daughter of Lucius Comee Flagg and Everline Walker Franklin. She was 23 years of age, he was 40. Whether this age differential played any part in what occurred is unknown. What is known is that on December 14, 1909, B.B. went home and shot and killed himself in the presence of Nannie Carrie. They had been married only four months.

There seems to have been little reason for a suicide. His obituary noted that he “*had been successful in real estate and had amassed a fortune.*” His investment in the electric railway

also seems to have been rewarded. The Roanoke Traction Company was successful and within a few years was building inter-urban railway lines not only in Virginia also in North Carolina. Friends who had seen him the evening before his death declared he was in a happy mood. Finally, his widow was adamant that the shooting had been an accident. Nevertheless, press accounts hinted at suicide. In the end, it is impossible to know.

Dillard was buried in Fairview Cemetery, not far from where his first wife was interred. His tombstone is shown here (Fig. 9). B.B.’s memorial stone does not give his full name, just the initials he preferred. Of interest is the inscription etched in the stone, seeming to allude to Dillard’s mysterious death: “*God gave—He took—He will restore. He does all things well.*”



Fig. 9: B. B. Dillard grave

Nannie Dillard, however, had one last surprise for the people of Roanoke who were buzzing over these events. At the time B. B. died she was three months pregnant. In July of the following year the Widow Dillard gave birth to a boy. With a full range of names available to her, almost unbelievably, she had him christened “Burger Brosius Jr.” (His friends called him “Bill.”)

A. Favier

By Mike Cianciosi

I recently acquired a really nice torpedo bottle that is embossed "A. FAVIER" on the front and "W.C.D.C." on the back. WCDC stood for Washington City District of Columbia. The bottle was presumably made by the Baltimore Glass house, based on its similarity to similar bottles that were made there. It is made of green glass, but it has an iridescent patina that makes it appear red when it is front-lit, and green when it is back-lit (and various colors in-between when you move your light-source around). Figures 1, 2 and 3 show how the bottle appears to change color as the light-source is moved.



In 2012, an A. FAVIER bottle that was not listed in the previous edition of our club book was unearthed by Tom Leveille in a privy dig. It's a cobalt blue, short squat with an iron pontil scar, embossed "A. FAVIER / SPRING GARDEN / ANALYZED MIN. / WATER W. CITY D.C.". This bottle is shown in figure 4.

There is a third variant of an A. FAVIER bottle that can be seen at this URL:

http://bottleden.com/APS2/aps_more.php?search_fd0=1259

This one is a cobalt blue, 8-sided, iron pontiled bottle that is embossed "A. FAVIER / MINERAL WATER / RECOMMENDED BY / M.D. FACULTY / W.C.D.C.". All 3 of these A.FAVIER variants are listed in the latest (2014) edition of our club book.

I decided to do some research on Mr. Favier. Agricola Favier was born in 1802 in France. At some point he came to America, because in 1830 he started a restaurant in Washington DC on the West side of 19th Street NW, between Pennsylvania Avenue & H Street. Favier was a chef at the restaurant, although over the

years he was sometimes referred to as a "confectioner", and his restaurant was also referred to as a confectionary store.

Favier must have been successful, because in 1839 he opened a second business called "Faviers Gardens" on M Street NW between 17th and 18th Streets (about 6 blocks away from the restaurant). It was sometimes referred to as a "Spring Garden" and sometimes as a "Summer Garden", presumably because it was open during the warm months of the year.. But "Spring Gardens" may have also referred to the fact that there were actual springs on the property, with water coming up out of the ground. Faviers Gardens hosted outdoor parties, picnics, weddings, etc. Water from these springs at Faviers Gardens was presumably used to create Favier's mineral water.

The first mention of Favier's bottled mineral water appears in the 1843 city directory. He may have started bottling mineral water even earlier than that – it's hard to pin down because there are no city directories from Washington DC between 1834 and 1843. It's possible that Favier was the first mineral water bottler in Washington DC. By the way, "mineral water" or "flavored mineral water" is what they called what we now refer to as "soda". Favier's flavors of mineral water included (but were not necessarily limited to) raspberry, lemon, and strawberry.

A full page advertisement in the 1843 directory describes that Favier's mineral water was bottled and available for delivery to "families at their residences" at any part of the District, and could be packed and "delivered to any of the neighboring cities" [digger alert – Favier bottles may exist in neighboring cities!]. The advertisement also shows a letter from a group of doctors touting the purity of the water from the springs, and the cleanliness of Favier's equipment. That must have been a selling point, as Tom Leveille's bottle embossing describes the contents as "analyzed mineral water", and the other cobalt blue variant embossing says "recommended by M.D. faculty". The carbonation & bottling of Favier's mineral water occurred at the same building as the restaurant/confectionary-store.

The restaurant/confectionary-store and gardens seem to have done very well in the 1840s and early 1850s. Favier was said to have catered dinner parties for congressmen. Then sometime in 1853/1854, Favier passed away. His restaurant property was listed as up for auction in April 1854, and his garden was sold sometime later. In 1855, the garden was open under new management and simply called "Spring Gardens", although newspaper advertisements continued to refer to it as "formerly Favier's Gardens" for quite some time, which leads one to believe that Favier's Gardens must have been a well known place.

That's all I could dig up on Mr. Favier. By the way, his first name shows up in documents as "Agricola", "Agricole", and "Agricol". The first one shows up the most often, so I went with that one. My sources for this article included the US Census, Washington DC City Directories, and various articles in the Evening Star newspaper between January 1853 and January 1909.

Upcoming Bottle Shows

June 27 Tulsa, OK
 July 11 Houston, TX
 July 17-18 Reno, NV
 July 18-19 Adamstown, PA
 July 25 Birmingham, AL
 July 25 Castle Rock, CO
 July 26 Ankeny, IA
 Sept. 13 Richfield, OH
 Sept. 18 Aurora, OR
 Sept. 19 Indianapolis, IN
 Sept. 27 Batsto, NJ
 Oct. 3 Richmond, VA
 Oct. 10 Coventry, CT
 Oct. 18 Findlay, OH
 Nov. 1 Elkton, MD
 Nov. 8 Pittsburgh, PA



Aug. 16 Poughkeepsie, NY
 Sept. 13 Pekin, IL
 Sept. 19 Santa Ana, CA
 Sept. 20 Westford, MA
 Sept. 27 Depew, NY
 Oct. 4 Chelsea, MI
 Oct. 11 Keene, NH
 Oct. 18 York, PA
 Nov. 7 Jacksonville, FL
 Nov. 14 Belleville, IL

July 31-August 2 Chattanooga, TN – The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors 2015 National Bottle Show



Two views of some pontiled bottles owned by Mike Cianciosi



Peter Rydquist holds a Rober Portner bottle at the May meeting



An ancient bottle and a cobalt pill bottle from Jim Sears' collection of items under three inches in height